

# CLAYHURST

ER #8

**ORIGINAL PURPOSE** To conserve grassland and aspen grove communities on rugged slopes along the Peace River

## OVERVIEW

<b>Date established:</b>	4 May 1971	<b>Location:</b>	4 km S of Clayhurst, 32 km E of Baldonnel, at Alberta border
<b>ORC #:</b>	3008	<b>Latitude:</b>	56°08'N
<b>Map number :</b>	94 A/1	<b>Longitude:</b>	120°02'W

<b>Total Area:</b>	316 ha	<b>Elevation:</b>	390-625 m
<b>Land:</b>	316 ha		

**Access:** Accessible by road from Clayhurst.

<b>Biogeodimatic Zones:</b>	Boreal White and Black Spruce (BWBS)
<b>Biogeodimatic Variant:</b>	BWBS Peace Moist Warm (mw1)
<b>Ecosection:</b>	Peace Lowland
<b>Region:</b>	Peace
<b>Management Area:</b>	North Peace

## COMPOSITION

**Physical:** The reserve primarily encloses south-facing breaks along the north bank of the Peace River. Small areas of plateau surface and alluvial floodplain are also present, as well as a short segment of the Peace River and steep banks on its south side. Over most of the area sandstone and shale bedrock of the Dunvegan Formation are overlain by colluvial material such as slopewash and slide debris. Two small streams dissect the area and have formed small alluvial fans. Alluvial action of the Peace River has been modified by upstream flow control which has eliminated the spring flood and reduced winter ice cover.

**Biological:** A mosaic of aspen forest, aspen parkland, shrubland, grassy slopes, eroded banks, floodplain cottonwood stands and sandbars are present. Aspen forest covers much of the area, especially the plateau surface and valley of the westernmost creek. Grassy slopes support wheatgrasses, needlegrasses and a variety of forbs. Common upland shrubs are Saskatoon, prickly rose and snowberry. Alluvial cottonwood stands have an understory dominated by various willows, red-osier dogwood and water birch.

Great Plains species of plants which enter British Columbia only in the Peace River Parklands have been collected in the reserve. Several other plants of similar distribution and rarity should also occur. As in the case of plants, some eastern birds range into the province only in this area. Waterfowl and shorebirds migrate through the valley and stop on sandbars and beaches. The American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Least Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler and Brewer's Blackbird are known to nest in the reserve. The valley slopes provide excellent winter range for deer.

## MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
long-leaved mugwort	Red listed		2
Canada Warbler	Blue listed	Threatened (2008)	2
Blue Jay	Yellow listed		4
Bullock's Oriole	Yellow listed		5
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Yellow listed		5
slender muhly	Red listed		1

## THREATS

**Climate Change:** The Northern location of this reserve may subject it to more dramatic warming and associated ecosystem change, such as summer drought and spring/winter flooding. These changed habitats may or may not remain suitable for the present fauna.

**Recreation:** Grass slope erosion due to quads and dirt bikes in reserve area.

## RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Effects of climate change in the physiographic units associated with the Alberta plains.  
Effects of the dam on the hydrological system and associated ecosystem changes.

## SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE CLAYHURST ER ACCOUNT

### Flora

aspen, trembling (*Populus tremuloides*)  
birch, water (*Betula occidentalis*)  
cottonwood, black (*Populus trichocarpa* ssp. *trichocarpa*)  
dogwood, red-osier (*Cornus stolonifera*)  
mugwort, long-leaved (*Artemisia longifolia*)  
muhly, slender (*Muhlenbergia filiformis*)  
needlegrass (*Stipa* spp.)  
rose, prickly (*Rosa acicularis* spp. *sayi*)  
Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)  
snowberry, (*Symphoricarpos* sp.)  
willows (*Salix* spp.)

**Fauna**

Blackbird, Brewer's (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

Deer (*Odocoileus* sp.)

Flycatcher, Least (*Empidonax minimus*)

Grosbeak, Rose-breasted (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)

Grouse, Ruffed (*Bonasa umbellus*)

Jay, Blue (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

Kestrel, American (*Falco sparverius*)

Oriole, Bullock's (*Icterus bullockii*)

Warbler, Canada (*Wilsonia canadensis*)

Warbler, Yellow (*Dendroica petechia*)